



MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Held Wednesday, January 27, 1999 For the purpose of discussing Green Ridge House Parking.

The meeting began at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; David E. Moran, City Clerk; Bo Ferguson, Management Analyst; Terri Hruby, Community Planner and Tom Anton, GPI.

Mayor Davis welcomed everyone and announced the purpose of the meeting. Ms. Hruby began by describing the first of three plans being presented to Council. Mr. Roberts asked about tree loss and replantings. Ms. Hruby responded that 10 trees were being lost and 4 were being replaced. Mr. Roberts hoped that trees could be placed on the Greenbelt Homes Incorporated (GHI) property between Green Ridge and 20 Court.

Mr. Cassels and Mr. Auerbach expressed opposition to the first plan which proposes additional parking on-site. Mr. Jewel noted that the trees shielded 20 Court from the lights. Mr. Turnbull expressed support for a plan that solves Green Ridge House's (GRH) perceived parking problem on GRH property. However he expressed concern about the impact of the plan on adjacent courts, particularly in the southwest corner. Mr. Jewel expressed support for angled or perpendicular street parking as a means of helping the entire community.

Ms. Hruby described plan 2 which included perpendicular parking on Ridge Road. Mr. York expressed concern about the 21 foot cut into the yard. He hoped Council would actively seek GHI's help in addressing this problem. Ms. Brant asked about speeding and traffic calming. She indicated it was her perception that speeding was not a problem on Ridge Road.

Mr. Jewel asked about who was paying for this project. Mr. Ferguson responded that in general the Community Development Administration (CDA) has said the city can use GRH funds. One GRH resident thought that speeding was a problem on Ridge. Mr. Cassels asked how far the sidewalk would be moved back. Mr. Anton responded that it was 8 feet back.

Mr. York stated that prior to GRH there was not a parking problem. He did not have a problem giving GRH more dedicated parking as long as GHI received additional dedicated parking. Another GRH resident expressed concern about safety on Ridge.

Ms. Hruby explained plan 3 with angled parking. Mr. Drake asked about the usage of the spaces in front of GRH. Ms. Hruby indicated her survey noted available parking until 10:00 p.m. Ms.

Evans indicated that parking availability is inconsistent. Mr. Cassels stated that two residents have 2 cars and this complicates the situation. Ms. Lewis indicated that there was ample availability near Gardenway. Ms. Evans indicated it was not safe to walk from Gardenway. Mr. Jewel reported that there was a tremendous growth rate in the number of cars at GRH. He also expressed concern about the facility being Section 8.

Ms. McCarthy asked if parking could be front or rear. Ms. Hruby responded that no restrictions were anticipated. Mr. Roberts hoped the discussion would move into parking management, because he believed this would be needed regardless of which option were chosen. A GRH resident expressed support for sharing with her neighbors.

Mr. York asked what the future cap would be for GRH. Staff responded that it was difficult to determine and noted that GRH's problem appeared to be unique.

Mayor Davis asked if Council has a consensus. Mr. Turnbull believed the City should have looked at parking management first before ever doing plans. Mr. Roberts favored plan 1, but wanted to wait on perpendicular or angled parking. He also wanted to replace the tree buffer on GHI property and replace other trees on a 2-1 ratio.

Mr. Putens favored option 3 because he wanted to address the GHI problem as well as the GRH problem.

Mayor Davis favored option 1 at this time and was not in favor of angled or perpendicular parking because of safety concerns, but would be willing to consider it in the future.

Ms. Brant expressed disappointment with the work session because parking management was placed last on the agenda.

Ms. Hruby stated the goals for developing a parking management program. She then proceeded to explain each option and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Ms. Evans and Mr. Jewel expressed the concern that the permit system is not currently enforced.

With regard to permit fees, Mr. Ferguson reported that Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has indicated that the city could not charge a permit fee for parking. Mr. Turnbull suggested that if the city used legal resources and political pressure they might be able to get this changed. Mr. Putens suggested that GRH provide input on the various management options.

Ms. Hruby outlined 3 parking management approaches that combined management options to achieve a specific goal. She stressed the need to educate current and future residents about the parking situation in the area.

Mr. Turnbull suggested a management approach that would make a concerted effort to market Green Ridge House as a facility that is accessible to services in the Center and accessible to public transportation. He suggested promoting GRH as an opportunity for a car-free lifestyle. Mr. Putens stated that this suggestion went too far and reflected one person's specific values.

Mr. Cassels suggested giving priority points to persons without cars. Mr. Ferguson reported that the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) did not allow this as an option.

Mr. York stated that the current situation was unfair. He asked about the possibility of permit parking in the area. Ms Hruby responded that permit parking could be established. Ms. Eichhorst noted that GHI was looking into this issue and was contemplating a request to City Council.

Mr. Roberts supported Mr. Turnbull's comments and stated that Greenbelt had always promoted itself as a community that provides services within walking distance. He believed that people without automobiles should get a preference and suggested that the city push this issue with HUD to address this situation.

Mayor Davis indicated that she would not support pursuing the preference points issue at this particular time. Mr. Cassells asked if the area could be marked based on the proposed plan. Council expressed support for flagging the area and marking trees before they proceed with any plan.

Mr. Turnbull favored staff pursuing a parking management plan. He suggested using 1 and 3 as a beginning step of a parking management plan. Mr. Turnbull believed it was unthinkable to pursue lot expansion before management options are tried. He requested that the issue not appear on the next agenda because he would be out of town.

Mr. Turnbull hoped the city would aggressively pursue changes to the HUD contract to implement a fee structure. Mayor Davis did not support the idea of a fee but was willing to look at other management options. Mr. Roberts stated that residents of GHI pay for their parking through management fees.

Mr. Roberts also stated that people who are truly of lesser means are losing out and not able to access GRH. Mr. Putens stated that the intent of GRH was to provide senior citizen housing that was affordable. Mr. Ferguson reported that to be accepted into GRH you have to meet HUD's standard of "very low income."

Mr. Turnbull stressed that a majority of GRH residents don't have cars and believed that Council needed to pay attention to these residents. There was some discussion regarding parking fees.

Mr. Jewel provided information on potential section 8 changes.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
David E. Moran, CMC
City Clerk